



Simon the Zealot & Thaddaeus

Transformed People: The Twelve Apostles
(B.L. Newberry, Spring 2020)

Simon and Thaddaeus within the Twelve (1 of 2)



Luke 6:14-16

Peter
Andrew
James
John

Philip
Bartholomew
Matthew
Thomas

James (the less)
Simon
Thaddeus
Judas Iscariot

- As with James (the Less), scripture records almost nothing about Simon (the Zealot) and Thaddaeus (also named Judas).
- What little we can possibly know must be inferred from their backgrounds.
- All we know of Simon is that he was an apostle and that he was initially a member of the Zealots [**Luke 6:15**]. He was also called Simon the Canaanite in both **Matt. 10:4** and **Mark 3:18**.
- The term Canaanite (KJV) is not geographical, but a Zealot reference.

Simon and Thaddaeus within the Twelve (2 of 2)



Luke 6:14-16

Peter
Andrew
James
John

Philip
Bartholomew
Matthew
Thomas

James (the less)
Simon
Thaddeus
Judas Iscariot

- There is no discussion of Simon in scripture, save his name being listed.
- Judas (not Iscariot) is also known as Lebbaeus Thaddaeus (**Matt. 10:3**). Judas was an extremely common name meaning “Jehovah leads”. Both Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus mean approximately “Heart Child”. Most scholars assume Judas was his given name and the other two describe his nature.
- Thaddaeus does ask one question of Jesus that is recorded in **John 14:22**. Other than this event, nothing more is recorded.

Simon's Character

Understanding the Zealots (1 of 2)



- Recall that Simon, in Mark 3:18 (KJV), is called Simon the Canaanite. This word is from the Aramaic root meaning “to burn with zeal”. This term aptly describes the Zealots.
- The Zealots were extreme anti-Roman fanatics that considered Israel subservient to God alone and absolutely no earthly authority.
- The group likely formed around A.D. 6 and consisted of religious purists (to the extreme). Anything that encroached upon Israel was deemed evil (governments, cultures, etc.) By around A.D. 60 the group had become extremely militant and were known to assassinate Romans as God’s will. The group was known for the “Sicarii” (dagger men) that assassinated using a curved knife that could be concealed within one’s robes.

Simon's Character

Understanding the Zealots (2 of 2)



- Many scholars believe it was the actions of the Zealots that spurred the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- History seems to indicate that the last group of Zealots were surrounded by Roman forces three years after the fall of Jerusalem and that they chose to kill themselves than to be captured by Rome.
- **Are we ever as zealous for God as the Zealot's seemed to be (even if misdirected)? Is such zeal completely wrong?**
- **Does it surprise you that Jesus would select a man like Simon the Zealot? Some might say he was essentially a misdirected, religious terrorist?**

Thaddaeus' Character

The Worth of a Gentle Soul



- The only story of Thaddaeus recorded in scripture is in **John 14:15-24**.

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

- Consistent with his inferred character, this is an innocent, tender question.

Stories of Their Later Actions

(Mix of historical and Biblical sources)



- Traditions on what happened to Simon the Zealot or extremely mixed. No historical account appears until centuries after his death (making them hard to verify). Accounts range from him being crucified in Samaria, crucified in Britain, to being sawed in half. He likely was killed for his faith, but no details are certain.
- According to tradition, Thaddaeus may have taught in Armenia, Syria, and Persia. Extremely mixed traditions of his death exist (clubbed to death, killed with an axe, or even crucified). Again, no details can be certain.
- What we know is that these two extremely different individuals remained true to Jesus to the end. Some traditions even say they were missionary partners.